

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Case File No.: AA-77519

EA No.: AK-040-99-009

Type of Action: R/W for Underground Electrical Power Line and Telephone Cable

Location: Copper River Meridian, Alaska  
T. 28 S., R. 54 E.,  
Sec. 21, Lot 1,

Applicant: Tlingit and Haida Regional Electrical Authority  
P.O. Box 210149  
Auke Bay, Alaska 99821

Prepared by: Dorothy Bonds, Realty Specialist

Preparing Office: Bureau of Land Management  
Anchorage Field Office  
6881 Abbott Loop Road  
Anchorage, Alaska 99507-2599

Date: January 29, 1999

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

A right-of-way (R/W) application has been received from Tlingit and Haida Regional Electrical Authority (T-HREA). The purpose is to install one 50 pair telephone cable for GTE Alaska and three underground electrical primary cables in an existing U.S. Army eight inch steel pipeline across Federal land. The underground power cables will serve approximately 40 consumers along the Haines highway from the Mosquito Lake road intersection to the Canadian border.

B. Conformance with Land Use Plan

No land use plan exists for this area. However, this environmental analysis assesses the impacts of the Proposed Action and provides a basis for a decision on the proposal(43 CFR 1610.8(b)(1).

C. Relationship To Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans

The lands have been selected by the State of Alaska. As required by Section 906(k) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has received concurrence from the Department of Natural Resources for this proposal.

II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

A. Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is for T-HREA to install one 50 pair telephone cable for GTE Alaska and three underground electrical primary cables. The cables were installed within an existing U.S. Army eight inch steel pipeline. The pipeline is located along the north side of the Haines Highway within BLM lands, Sec. 21, Lot 1, T. 28 S., R. 54 E., Copper River Meridian, Alaska. T-HREA completed the Chilkat Valley Electrification project in September 1996.

The construction work included the installation of cables from Mosquito Lake (Mile Post 27) to the Canadian Border (Mile Post 39). The pipeline was exposed at quarter mile (1/4) intervals, and a ten foot section removed to allow pulling the cables through the pipe. No work actually occurred on the BLM parcel, nor was there any surface disturbance.

Neubauer Engineering and Technical Services (NETS), on behalf of T-HREA, has applied for a R/W for the purpose of installing, operating, maintaining, repairing and replacing the electrical underground power cables in the pipeline. The R/W will be 20 feet wide and 1320 feet in width.

There was no disturbance to the Federal land. All work was underground within the eight inch steel pipeline. Unless there is a natural disaster that destroys the pipeline and the installed electrical cables, physical access to this property should

never be necessary.

B. No Action Alternative

The No Action alternative is denial of the application.

III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

- A. The small communities around Chilkat Valley were positively affected by the construction. These communities are Klukwan, Wells, Mosquito Lake, Covenant Life, and Canadian border stations. This project provided the Chilkat Valley consumers along the Haines highway with quality and reliable electrical services to replace small generators. The pipeline corridor is surrounded by Sitka spruce and hemlock vegetation.

The following critical elements of the human environment were not present or would not be affected by the Proposed Action:

Air Quality  
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern  
Farm Lands (Prime or Unique)  
Floodplains  
Native American Religious Concerns  
Wastes, Hazardous or Solid  
Water Quality (Drinking/Ground)  
Wetlands  
Wild and Scenic Rivers  
Wilderness  
Environmental Justice

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

A. Impacts of the Proposed Action

No construction actually occurred on the BLM parcel. Vaults were placed on adjacent properties and the line pulled through the pipeline. No surface disturbance occurred. This parcel is currently selected by the State of Alaska.

Cultural Resources: The Proposed Action was completed in September 1996, and upon inspection, no evidence of any unearthed cultural material was observed. The Cultural clearance was done on March 2, 1995, Case File No. AA-77519.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The impact of the Proposed Action and alternative on threatened and endangered plants and animals and their habitats were evaluated in accordance with the Endangered Species Act. Based on available information, the Proposed Action would not have affected any threatened or endangered species or their habitats. Therefore, no consultation with the Fish and Wildlife Service was considered necessary pursuant to the Act and none was undertaken.

Subsistence Uses Under Section 810 of ANILCA: The Proposed Action does not affect any lands under Federal Subsistence Management (Section 810 ANILCA) and an evaluation of use, distribution, abundance, and access to subsistence resources is not required.

- B. Impacts of the No Action Alternative  
Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no impacts to existing resources.
- C. Residual and Cumulative Impacts  
No residual or cumulative impacts will occur from this project.
- D. Mitigation  
No mitigating measures are necessary since this action does not impact the environment.

V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

- A. List of Preparers  
Dorothy Bonds - Realty Specialist  
Donna Redding - Archaeologist  
Jeff Denton - Subsistence Specialist & Wildlife Biologist